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Intellectual Leadership in  
American History

By  
Alexander H. Pullock

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



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INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP  
IN  
AMERICAN HISTORY.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY OF PHI BETA KAPPA,

AT

BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE,

JUNE 15th, 1875.

BY

ALEXANDER H. BULLOCK.

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## ADDRESS.

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OUR theme should be fitting to the year of centennial anniversaries, of which we are passing the threshold. It is apparent that the present and few succeeding years, recalling the days of our first declared nationality and the series of measures in the council and the field which gave success to the declaration, will become henceforth memorable for festal days. We are to have a time of competitive celebrations marked by liberal pageant in token of martial events, and the sensuous parts of our nature are likely to be worked to their capacity. Of all that which is to be commemorated the share most striking to the average every-day senses undoubtedly comes from the narrative of arms, and it meets a responsive magnet in a people under whose sober side touches of military spirit have always found quick reception. They have inherited a taste of the soldier's life. Descended from ancestors who for more than one hundred years after cisatlantic colonization were engaged in war or were every moment

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exposed to it, summoned now by these thick-coming anniversaries to recite the annals of the field and to realize in their own quickened pulse the rapture of victory, we need not wonder that they seize upon methods of commemoration the most demonstrative, the most cognizable by the outward senses; that they subordinate the oration to the spectacle; that they

“Let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth.”

This is according to nature, this is Anglo-Saxon, this is American. But it belongs to an assembly of educated men to discharge the same duty in another mode of procedure. They penetrate beneath the surface of historical narrative, behind the scenery of battles, among the more subtle forces of our national development, which have been chief agencies in conducting us to the high situation from which the celebrants may now deliver their pyrotechnics.

We cannot pass in review from our own advanced position over the stirring Revolutionary stage, over the broad and picturesque colonial period, back to the more serious era of the advent and settlement, and not pay tribute to the age which went before them all, out of which they sprung, a part of which they were—to the masters who directed the mind of England two centuries and a half ago, who came here in person and in representatives, whose association with our subsequent history is immortal. Our epic

### *The Lead of the Preceding Age.*

from the first embarkation down to the last admission of a State is especially interesting to the intelligent inquirer for the spiritualistic, the intellectual element which preceded and give it birth, animated it in all its parts, supplied its actors with motive power, which has made it the story of a people sprung from the best race of men at the time of its matured strength, and advancing to a higher plane of civilization than that upon which it began. The heroic courage, the sorrow and suffering, the adventure and enterprise which mark the century from 1660, when the colonies had acquired a fixed and homogeneous condition, down to declared independence, which give to it in the reading the changing shades of serious annals and gay romance, were the natural flowering of the English mind under the training of an equal period preceding.

The beginning of the American people was but the transfer to the transatlantic continent of an eclectic and adventurous portion of the English nation. These passing anniversaries carry us back indeed to stages of infancy as to numbers, as to material appointments and possessions, but in the higher forces of civilization, manhood and culture, there was here from the start the same maturity which crowned the English communities in the golden age of Elizabeth and her successor. Whenever you contemplate what that maturity was, how broad in studied letters and statesmanship, in progressive

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science and art, and especially how it bore on its advancing crest the promise of deliverance from spiritual bondage, you are contemplating the actual state of the mind of the planters of this nation when they stepped from an old country to a new, only changing the scene of their life in the conflicts of their age. The spirit of Northern Europe was then for the first time in full activity under immense influences proceeding from the Reformation and the introduction of the art of printing. At Frankfort-on-the-Main the traveller walks from the public square, where the memorial group of bronze statues commemorates the introduction of printing, to the house in which Luther once lodged while in the flesh, feeling that he is venerating in authentic symbols the authors of a revolution of which the benefits have reached to every fireside in Christendom. Slowly overcoming the sleep of the Northern communities, and moving with the Divine assurance which always accompanies every true reform, these resistless agencies at length imparted a stimulation to the mental habits of Great Britain which the successors of the Virgin Queen might check indeed but could not suppress. The publication of the results of maritime voyage and discovery on this continent spread a glamour over the spirit of curious and daring men, which scarcely the sternest disappointment and disaster could dispel. The tide was rising to its flood at the opening of the seventeenth



### *The Lead of the Preceding Age.*

century. A higher poetry and philosophy, strange religious rhapsody and religious exploration, the lessons of ancient and heroic freedom brought out into alluring light by the changed tastes and opportunities for the old languages, a wider education, another dispensation over the domain of practical science and invention, a new destiny for the aim of benevolence and philanthropy, wisdom of every degree, conceits of every kind, but in all and through all a paramount and aggressive progress lighted the modern world on its pathway. For the next fifty years the air was exhilarant with intellectual vitality. The genius of change penetrated the palace, the closet, and the shop, and throughout the capital city of our race the vigil of night was kept faithful to the revolutionary studies. "God is decreeing," Milton said, "to begin some new and great period," and then with quaint expression of the national self-consciousness which has never gone out of his countrymen from that day to this, he adds:

What does God then but reveal himself, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen. Behold now this vast city ; a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded by his protection ; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and hands there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present as with their homage and their fealty the approaching reformation : others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and conviction.

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Such was that age; and such was the strength of the American beginning. Out of that age and under that lead we came. Ours was not a transfusion of blood from one set of men into another; nor an offshoot; nor an engraftment; it was the removal of ripening English minds in English bodies into another country. During the fifty years of active emigration as good came here as were left behind. The early peopling of Virginia was by the average Cavaliers of the day, under the direction of higher grades of intellect at their lead, and there was soon present a large array of men of education, property, and condition; Maryland from the outset rose upon the shoulders of persons of high birth, moved to their destination by the best thought at home; the ships of Massachusetts brought here many of the choice sons of education, scholars in the languages, of culture the same that prevailed in England, not cosmic indeed as modern learning, for the old scholastic studies of the schoolmen then overlaid the universal mind of Europe. The names of these intellectual leaders are too many and too familiar to need repeating; they rise at every recurring thought of the earliest religious freedom of the world in Maryland, and of the most powerful republican theocracy of the world in Massachusetts. Then we ought to consider that these heads of the nascent provinces were in constant intercourse and contact with the best talent and wisdom of Europe, and that

*Intellectual character of the settlement.*

our separate colonial histories, down to the very day of independence, associate the new country and the old by ties which linked together in personal relations the wise and great of both lands. Winthrop and Endicott, Cotton and Hooker, and their associated managers in the other provinces, brought with them and kept up afterwards acquaintance with the upper life on the other side. At one time or another, on this or the other side of the ocean, the heads of these provinces were in living familiarity with the high discussions and high disputants under two reigns; they saw and heard Lord Bacon when he pleaded gently and wisely for toleration; they remembered Witgift speaking softly for them, and Bancroft with his frown; they caught light from all the central sources; they learned stability of faith from Pym and from Sidney, and public law from Hale and from Coke; they received direct communication and counsel from John Hampden; they read and perhaps saw acted the picturesque and doric Comus of Milton, and they lived by the side of the prince of poets and the prince of philosophers, who in the language of Macaulay made their age a more glorious and important era in the history of the human mind than the age of Pericles or Augustus. It is their association with living genius and learning which is to us in this day a lingering inspiration, for such instruction of States lengthens out through the generations. It is something of value to us that the

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founder of Rhode Island kept her interest warm by the side of the throne through intimacy with the learned historian and premier Clarendon; that the Carolinas are imperishably related to Shaftesbury, the paragon of accomplished ministers, with John Locke, the philosopher so quaint, original, and great, whose framework of government did not endure but whose benevolence survived to welcome the Huguenots of France; that the Covenanters of New-Jersey were saturated with the spirit of Milton while living, as they had been educated under the writings of George Buchanan who went before them; that over the wide South, first named Virginia, still lingers a memory that kindles to enthusiasm at the mention of their visitor, the incomparable, the thousand-souled Sir Walter Raleigh.

In thus speaking of the early masters who have left their image in our history, I am indulging in no rhetorical illusion. The difficulty in our apprehension of the facts lies within our natural limitations. Remoteness of time casts a haze over our perception of the continuity and duration of mental influences in forming the character of States. If we could place ourselves in palpable connection with the generations which have passed, the train of public educators would pass before us in life-like and august procession. But this can be only partially attained by grouping in speech the great personages of history. A venerable and remarkable

### *Continuity and Duration of Mental Influences.*

Chief-Justice of New England, dead within fifteen years, used to say that he once saw a man whose father had seen the first child born in the harbor of the Pilgrims; thus seeming to span with his own hand more than two centuries of Massachusetts. But historical analysis and elimination furnish to the thoughtful student a sufficient thread for tracing the lines of descent in the life of communities. In the year 1637, about the time when a governing power was established in the place where we are now assembled, he who was afterward the author of *Paradise Lost*, made a journey into Southern Europe. In Paris he met and was entertained by Grotius, who first wrote for freedom of commerce against maritime restrictions; while he remained there Descartes put to press his first great philosophical treatise, which is still quoted among the causes of change in modern thought; in Italy he turned aside to visit the injured Galileo, whose persecution was a feature of the ecclesiastical tyranny of the time; and in the album of an Italian nobleman at Genoa he wrote his autograph after that of Thomas Wentworth, the brilliant Earl of Strafford. We find, therefore, in this group of cotemporaries, thus accidentally brought together, five first-rate figures that were directly allied to the advancement of our own country. Grotius, that "chief of men," who laid the foundation of international intercourse in the principles of justice, whose doctrines educated the

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colonies to an early and constant resistance of the navigation acts of Parliament which resulted in their independence; Descartes, the revolutionist philosopher, who enunciated the law of individual consciousness and intellectual freedom, which at once became seminal and vital in every provincial organization on this side, and which to-day underlies the constitution of every American commonwealth; Galileo, one of the pioneers and one of the martyrs of the revolt of science, whose misfortunes under inquisitorial absolutism reached the ears of the brotherhood of reform and helped raise the party which swept with human rights over England and the new world in the West; Lord Strafford, who returned home to aid our cause under Charles, by his betrayal of the franchise of his country and our own, and after granting no lenity to our friends or our cause at length stretched his own neck upon the scaffold; and John Milton, who unlike his fellow-countryman and fellow-traveller, stood fast to the challenge of his conscience, and proclaimed in immortal prose the brave thoughts of the new dispensation,

“In liberty’s defense, a noble task,  
Of which all Europe rang from side to side,”

which have moved to triumphant deeds eight generations upon this continent. It acquaints us with the dignity of our pupilage thus to draw near in imagination to our instructors long departed; it brings before our sight that splendid age from which

### *Power of a few men.*

we have derived our power, to call these masters around us; we are with them, and they are with us, when we see the blood of the first Governor of Massachusetts coursing among us in the person of a most accomplished descendant, and the blood of another flowing for a testimony to mankind under the headsman's axe; when we look upon the regicide judges face to face, Goffe and Whalley on the banks of our Connecticut, and Dixwell amid his studies in the shade of New Haven; when Bancroft and Macaulay only disagree whether Cromwell and Hampden actually took passage and went on ship-board for Boston; when we know that our own Raleigh was a member of the same club in London with Ben Jonson and Shakespeare; when every spirited youth of Massachusetts is stirred to the study of the martyred Sidney by his Latin on her arms.

Quite possibly we do not often enough reflect how effectually the spirit of one man, of a few men, may decide the characteristics of a people, the destiny of a State. Under the military system of Europe in former ages it was within the power of a single man to conquer a city and write his name upon its walls, to modify, dismember, reconstruct a kingdom, and affix to it for a longer or shorter period his own projected will and law. Napoleon was the latest and the greatest of this order, but his imperial creations were quickly swept back to their original

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relations—for though the sword may carve the pathway to a throne, it cannot engrave the enduring character of a people. But the moral agents in the forming of communities leave more lasting impressions, which are beyond the power of accident to remove or to change. All the laws of human condition, natural generation, veneration, imitation, faith, tradition, and memory combine to perpetuate the mold of a commonwealth cast by a master after the pattern of divine virtue, and every succeeding intellect of grasp and sway may add to its symmetry and its strength. Behold at our door the power of a man abiding through eight generations! Taught to shrink from the forms of arbitrary power whilst a boy lounging about the doors of the Star Chamber, taught law from the living lips of Coke, tolerant charity and reforming love from the private hours of Milton, many languages at Oxford where the classic statue of liberty broke in Grecian model on his sight, taught experience and trial, sorrow and courage in Massachusetts, Roger Williams came hither from fortunes as varied, as romantic as those of John Smith or Walter Raleigh, and planted the first purely free government on the globe. While Descartes was writing out in clearest dialectics, Williams was establishing in concrete and everlasting form the absolute and unqualified freedom of conscience under human government. I do not know why I



*Power of a few men.*

should not say, since it is true, that Massachusetts in her march of progressive culture took two centuries almost to a year from his removal out of her borders to strike from her own Constitution the last faded badge of the connection of the Church and the State. The charter which he dictated to the Crown, alone of the original thirteen scarcely changed in essentials, still endures for his visible monument; but in the breadth of true catholicity, in the belief of the benevolence of human nature, in the cultivation of methods of peace and fraternity, in the predominance of a religious sect never at variance with any other, which have tided the life of his gifts and graces over the lapse of two hundred and forty years, the memorial of his invisible glory is reflected through all habitations and all hearts. The lessons of the teacher caught by the leaders of the following age have imparted a tinge and flavor to the culture of the State. Perhaps in imagination, perhaps in the discernment of reality, I seem to myself to trace the extension of the same intellectual freedom to another, who in the next century impressed his benevolent genius upon the souls of this island home. Berkeley gave to this people the four midway years of his life of spiritual amenity. Of every attainment, grace and accomplishment, admired by every school of philosophy, while he maintained his own, beloved by Pope, and Swift, and Addison, while they hated each

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other, beloved by all in that galaxy that continued the light of the reign of Anne over that of two Georges, he came and erected his bower of study among the cliffs of this coast. In letters, and in the walks of village life, he was to his generation a fountain of instruction, and such fountains in a free commonwealth never dry. And in the century, still the next, another and kindred spirit, native-born of the island, devoted to the State the latest years of his inspiring lessons, "the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love," so rich in the field of general literature, so pleading for a wider scope of popular education, for the enfranchisement of man, for the world's peace, so aglow with the sweet influences of Christianity. To the scholarly and devout resident of Newport the whole scene, of cliff, and beach, and the breathing sea, takes on the aspect of a memorial imperishable to Berkeley and to Channing. Felicitous has been the lot of Rhode Island to have had distributed over her three centuries three intellectual masters, whose administration of her thought and aspiration was never colored by asceticism or gloom, was always stimulating, always serene, always encouraging, in full accord with the divine monosyllable that glistens from her shield.

The term of active European emigration to this land covered rather less than the length of two generations, and all that we are, and all that we have, may in a large degree be traced back to the

### *Statesmanship of the Colonial Leaders.*

public character which was then established. The roll of those who came contained a number of leading minds as large proportionately as the roll of those who remained behind. Something that was chivalrous, something that was courtly, still adhered to those heads, much learning of the kind that then prevailed, of studied history and language, perhaps not yet much practised statesmanship, but as events soon showed, a great capacity for it. Vane and Williams, Endicott and Saltonstall, Winthrop the senior and the junior, Hooker and Cotton, were fair types of the leaders on both sides, most of them English university men, all of them such as led England on to the Revolution of 1688 and rescued her Constitution. I allow they became especially engrossed in the high mysteries of divinity, which became shaded by their forest abode, and took in the vagaries of a larger freedom under a new sky. But as they erected the altars of the church and the state upon the same Zion and within the same temple, the same subtlety which guarded the one, also guarded the other; the same enthusiasm, if you please, the same fanaticism, which sustained them in the pursuit of abstruse theology, also sustained them in the pursuit of a new liberty; the same extravagant rejection of authority which made them faithful dogmatists for the church, made them obstinate partisans for the state; the same conscious assurance that made them polemics in

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religion, made them republicans in politics. During the calm and study of the residence of their sect in Switzerland, by the "clear, placid Leman," in the reflection of light and shadow from the eternal monarchs of nature, their ideas of the unseen world had become consolidated, their ideas of the social, civil framework had become codified; they would have no sovereign in their hearts save God, no sovereign in their laws not subordinated to their interpretation of Him; as the phrase goes, they would have a church without a bishop, a state without a king. Those were great ideas for that age, and they could only be enforced by great and original minds, comprehensive and flexible enough for the founders of a nation. Now, if you follow the history of the scene on which these views were acted out, you find that these actors, to their character as theologians, whatever you may think of that, soon added the acquired character of astute, wary and stubborn statesmen. As religionists and as politicians their path must soon divide; as religionists they carried everything in their own way and with a high hand, with none to obstruct them; as politicians the shadows of kingly pretensions advanced gradually over the sea, enveloped them in darkness and shut them in to their wit's end. They were obliged to supplement religious zeal with a large worldly wisdom, and all the way from about 1640 to 1689 you observe in the directors of these

### *Statesmanship of the Colonial Leaders.*

provinces a growing genius for affairs, a chary taste for civil policy, a certain wise, strong sense of diplomacy. When the mailed hand of royal interference approached, so long as they were too feeble to resist, they were Fabian in their policy, and warded off the hour. On grave occasions they convened their synods and held their fasts, but these became a school and an education; the pulpits were filled by acute teachers, who preached altogether on the right side; so that, allowing for their greater share of prayer and praise, they had in their synods and their fasts all that we should have now in our best chosen constitutional conventions. There is nothing more interesting in all the life of these progenitors of our history than their studied use of diplomacy in the years covering the fall of the first Charles and the rise of the second, with Cromwell intervening—a period requiring them to act parts so delicate and so variant, with no electric cable to supply them in the evening with the policy for the next morning. Great results hung suspended on the action of the ministers who assembled in their synods in Boston—for there was not a newspaper published in America till the eighteenth century—and they rapidly became masters of the situation more by their reserved power in diplomacy than by their inspired power in theology. They were preparing their generation for a day of greater

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power, when the bell of revolution might safely strike the hour.

That beyond question was the educational period of the country, as youth is the period for character in the individual life. It was her education under the champions of her freedom, fitted by endowment and culture to carry her through the tremendous process God had ordained. Such was their situation and their power. A kind of mediæval port and mien, something like an intellectual feudalism, gave to them the walk of masters; they admonished others against the authority of kings and nobles, but they did not relinquish the authority due to themselves as chosen vessels of the divine purpose for the coming nation. Under their treatment of kings and parliaments and commissions, their constituents and followers inhaled their first conception of an American nationality. Out of that robust and austere school came the broader culture and sweeter dispositions of later days. Advanced into the next century, those stern and dark features had become softened by another education, by schools and libraries more purely American, by a younger class of scholars spread over the country from the university at Cambridge; but we ought never to forget that the schools, the libraries, and the university were established by them. Time was diffusing their mind like the waters of irrigation, which, as they receded from the shade and gloom of their source, took the

*A decisive Historic Period.*

warmth of the open field and the sparkle of the cheerful sun. Mankind could not long live and be happy under the frowns of a puritanical theocracy. At once the school of the church and the state, as it approached the middle of the eighteenth century it exhibited the manifestations of change; the work had been laid and transmitted to a different generation. Society had passed through the transformation which in Scotland would be necessary before she could welcome Walter Scott, and in America before she would trust herself in the arms of George Washington. From the church all that was superstitious, or cruel, or whimsical in the day of Cotton Mather had been burned away in the expiatory fires through which bodies politic must sometimes pass, and it rose with a fresh glory in the grandeur of Edwards, the learning of Cooper, and the heroism of Mayhew. The state, too, now shone with a majesty distinctively its own, and ascended to the respect of Christendom under the eloquence of Otis, the learning and strength of John Adams, the magnetic genius of Quincy and Warren, the wisdom of Franklin and the culture of Dickinson, and the unconquerable will of Samuel Adams. But all that larger growth and attraction, all that wider range of tastes and ambitions expanding grandly toward the high things of knowledge, were the long wrought, the hard taught product of the human mind, the

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human will, under the leadership of the age that had gone to its rest.

A more critical urgency for action had now arrived. A better combined array of moral forces than that which led the colonies in the last years of their dependence and the first of their union we might search the centuries to discover. I take for granted you agree with me that the more cultivated minds take the lead in civil life. There is a theory that public revolutions proceed upward from the body of the people, and control, enforce the orders of intelligence above. I do not so read our own or any other history. At all times, as it seems to me, perhaps more appreciably to our observation in times of great urgency in human affairs, the reasonings and generous sentiments of great intellects work their way into the common channels of the general mind, and fill the office of its directory; and the attempt to make our own country an exception to the rule is a suggestion of flattery which the people do not ask, and an illusion which the truth will not bear. The nature of men has not changed since the old essayist declared that in the coalition of human society nothing is more pleasing to God, or more agreeable to reason, than that the highest mind should exercise the chiefest power. If it were not so, education could not advance upon individuals, nor enlightened progress upon nations. The lower strata of mind draw the electric fires of



### *Mind Governs.*

the higher masters. Heads of wisdom are better than princes to a state passing through its crises. They supply intellectual aliment to its thought, they impart sympathetic activity to its torpid faculties.

    Their speech betimes  
Inspires the general heart; its beauty steals  
Brightening and purifying through the air  
Of common life.

And there is another part of this law governing public opinion, to which the whole race is subject; I mean the spontaneous, instinctive acknowledgment of intellectual authority, the law of faith, of confidence in superior intelligence. We are all of us and always under such a lead. Mr. Carlyle, who is the least of a literary demagogue, puts this truth home to every one of us after his own abrupt and grotesque manner: "Now if sheep always, how much more must men always, have their chiefs, their guides. Man, as if by miraculous magic, imparts his thoughts, his mood of mind, to man. Of which high, mysterious truth, this disposition to imitate, to lead and to be led, this impossibility not to lead (and be led) is the most constant and one of the simplest manifestations." And the globe has not borne another people who paid greater deference to such guides than our own. It is here that this law of our nature has freer and fuller play than in the countries which are overshadowed by rank and caste, by venerable heraldry and names artificial, extending over generations their charm. While a single

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family and its aristocratical connections monopolized the administration of England during a generation, Chatham was admitted to power only because the Almighty had clothed him with characteristics which overawed mankind, and Burke never held any first-rate office at all under government during the whole of his magnificent life. But in this country, rank having no existence, nothing else of conventional kind has taken its place, and it has never been possible for wealth, or any fiction, or any pretension to withdraw for a length of time the body of its citizenship from following the directory of wisdom. In the long run of time you cannot fail to see that the hero-worship of our countrymen takes to some uncommon degree of lettered fame, some rare combination of intellectual powers, some form or manifestation of special genius or general capacity. Of our countrymen travelling by thousands in foreign lands, while one turns aside from Brussels to visit the scene of the battle of kings at Waterloo, ten others make the longer journey from London to Stratford to pay the tribute of their veneration at the tomb of Shakespeare.

I return, then, to my topic, that in the dawn of this national independency there was at work upon popular opinion a wise, brilliant, and effective array of heads which is not easily paralleled. The colleges were in tune with the urgency, and the pulpits were filled by a ministry of patriotism

### *Intellectual Chiefs of the Revolution.*

toned by a cultivated wisdom. The field of civic discussion was under the training of a class of men in some of the colonies who would have adorned the best of commonwealths at the most brilliant of its periods; the same representative, scholarly statesmen upon whom Chatham pronounced the remarkable eulogium, which Franklin from the gallery heard him deliver, and which has ever since been quoted with pride on these shores. For a classical, refined public speech, coming from studied men, but penetrating the universal heart, it was a golden age. It lifted upward and onward to action every degree of mediocrity below it. Fifty names start up for mention which cannot be surpassed in our day. In the South were Rutledge, Gadsden, Peyton Randolph, Bland, the two Lees, most of them educated in both countries, re-enforced by Jefferson and his peers, who breathed into the public spirit their own cultivated chivalry; in the centre was Dickinson, fresh from his law of the Temple at London, finished in elegant literature, whose thoughts passed in French over the other Continent, to whose support a little later came Franklin, direct from the society of Burke and Pitt, bringing his whole nature enriched for his country; in New England, too many rather than too few; of whom was Hopkins, who knew all poetry and all history, who, John Adams said, instructed him four years in committee-room in science and learning, whose old age

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to all coming in contact was an inspiration; of whom were the chiefs of Massachusetts, whose roll rounds with the names of the two Adamses. Samuel Adams was something besides a pious and patriotic Puritan; his humanity was exquisite and his erudition was genteel, blending grace and attraction with the intensity of his appeal. John Adams educated the colonies to an intelligent comprehension of the situation which was necessary to go before action, and in this work he more completely than any other man of this nation illustrated the proverb that knowledge is power; his research was boundless and his talent was of every kind; he made history and the Scriptures, the classic, ancient ages, the principles of law and speculative philosophy familiar to the common understanding, while he rallied the learned professions and the schools of the land to the mighty work in hand. There were by that time as able lawyers here as the lawyers of the Crown, and he was at their head. Scarcely ever before had the spirit of a passing time called into such intensity of use every grace, every accomplishment and attribute of the upper sphere of the human mind, and never before had any people so confidently trusted to it their hope and destiny. They would follow only the wisest and best; in their vast undertaking they would employ no mediocrity; Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts would have no less an agent in London than Benjamin Franklin; New

*Aid from the Highest Minds of England.*

York with its salary of a thousand dollars would have no other than Edmund Burke. They believed that "a great empire and little minds go ill together." To which roll in the hour of its need was added yet another—the man of little less than divine virtue, the Father of his Country, the leader of her armies, the most glorious of her citizens, the founder and protector of her liberty, he who despised the name of king, yet himself was more majestic, whom God manifestly favored, that he was in all things his helper—the unapproached and unapproachable Washington.

Nor alone were their chiefs upon this side of the Atlantic. This national fabric was shaped, in part, by most expert hands of Englishmen. In the prolonged debates of many years there was a Parliamentary minority of the choicest and greatest of the realm, who spoke for justice under the influence of the proudest day of the British forum. By general consent the most flourishing period of English eloquence extends for about half a century from the maturity of Lord Chatham's genius to the death of Fox, and a good part of its most brilliant exhibitions was during the ten years which covered the American questions. Between the opening and the close of those questions passed across the stage Grenville, Barrè, North, Camden, Mansfield, Charles Townshend, Fox, Burke, and the heaven-born orator, the elder Pitt—enough for a nation's

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history and a nation's glory. The parliamentary literature of that school can meet the philosophical criticisms of Burke himself; it can stand the test of time and the admiration of ages, because it was founded in good reason and just sentiment. It was listened to in the speaking by some of our leaders from home sitting in the gallery, among whom were Quincy and Franklin; it came to these shores in fast-sailing packets, was spread from the ice-fields to the palmettoes by the wide-winged press, was repeated from mouth to mouth, floated in the air. It was not all upon our side of the questions, but it passed here under the hands of masters, was sifted of sophism and error, was sent forth, stirring grand sentiments of duty, and circulated, all-inspiring, over the New World.

Nor again to the schools of American and English authorities alone were our fathers of that day shut in for their tuition. From another continent, another tongue, and another religion they heard voices of lesson and sympathy. We are forever indebted to France for an early and a late infusion of lofty sentiment which has pervaded our public life. In the story of religious and romantic adventure displayed in exploring and settling this country the French enthusiasts stand out with radiant lineaments upon the historical canvas. Advancing always within the orders of the Catholic church, penetrating through primeval forests to the far

*French Enthusiasts our Leaders.*

West, enduring every hardship and privation of pioneers, leaving their pathway in the wilderness everywhere blazed by the lily and the cross, ministering in their faith amid the vortex of savage tribes which whirled like angels of darkness around them, one after another yielding up their life in solitary martyrdom, in the extremest hour chanting in the Latin of the schools of France hymns which even then were a thousand years old, they have left in every French town of North America, in our written annals and unwritten traditions, the traces of their spiritual and intellectual heroism. Expelled at length as a political power from this country by Great Britain, the Nemesis of history took in hand their vindication. While the gallant Wolfe, by a magical stroke, won to the British Crown every French possession east of the Mississippi, there were those at work in the silence of studies about the gay capital of France, engineering an intellectual revolution which, within twenty years, would sweep from these States the last vestige of British dominion. About the year 1763, when everything here was ceded to the Crown of England, the spirit of a new philosophy was spreading over France and radiating upon Great Britain and America. To those who were especially engrossed in the study it presented itself, perhaps under no deep sense of responsibility, as the fresh luxury of newly enfranchised minds, but to the world it bore the fruits of political revolution. The

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satire of Voltaire, aimed at the Church which needed it much, fell with effectual blow upon the State which needed it more. The ethereal and radical eloquence of Rousseau circulated as an atmosphere; the young men crowded the benches and the salons of the new school in all the larger cities of the kingdom; and at one time, just before the declaration of our independence, more than half a dozen of bold teachers of speculation, wit, levity, reason, and philosophy were seated around the throne as its premier and its advisers. It was the preparatory school for modern revolution. It was classical in its study of the ancient histories. It soon found its theory and passion impersonated in the youthful Lafayette, whose early readings had imaged in his reflection and love the models of lost republics, and quickly afterward it found the seal of its assurance in the treaty of alliance with the United States. The authorities of that keen, speculative, daring philosophy gave the touch of fate to American independence. And in the memorable reception of Benjamin Franklin at Versailles, when that brilliant court, destined so soon to pass away, was captivated by the decorous simplicity which the great American knew quite well when and how to wear, we behold the last ceremony in which old institutions and old prescriptions, represented by kings and nobles, bowed unawares before the divinity of a new liberty and a new world—the



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ceremony in which that new liberty and new world, in its plain, untitled representative, returned the salute to the masters behind the throne who were moving the world to revolution. I have never wondered that Jefferson, who after our peace passed four grateful years at Paris, intimate and favorite with its eminent philosophers, caught "the habit and the power of dalliance with those large, fair ideas of freedom so dear, so irresistible" to the French people. Almost a century has since passed, and his name is even now treasured in the hearts of the French leaders of opinion as that of a master and instructor—an impressive illustration of the ceaseless international exchange of thought. Three years ago Charles Sumner came to my apartment in Paris directly from an interview with the leader of the more advanced Republicans, now recognized as their leader probably by a larger number of men than any other living civilian in any country, the bold and eloquent Gambetta. He related to me the details of the conversation. Gambetta said: "What France most needs at this present time is a Jefferson." I will not keep back the reply of the great Senator: "You want first a Washington, and your Jefferson will come afterwards."

My limitations compel me to allusions only on the field of our history. We usually observe that the times requiring the largest exercise of the intellectual forces, and so bringing into activity the

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supremest men, have been periods of civil, not of military events, those preceding or following the trial of war. Succeeding to the Revolution came the exigent time for organizing under permanent forms—the constitutional epoch. That term of seven years was the test to virtue, to the capacity for outlook and statesmanly projection, without the aid of any light reflected from older nations upon the questions to be adjusted here. If you reflect how divided this people were after the attainment of independence; that all local traditions, prejudices, and attachments which had been buried in the war, then returned with a risen life and vigor; that diversities of origin, blood, and temperament resumed their individual forces; that idiocrasies of religion became sympathetic with localities; that the vast bulwarks of the natural configuration of the continent frowned in the way of our unity,—you only recall in part the division and distress of the people of the United States under the confederation. It soon grew to a public opinion which alternated between national hope and national despair. The Convention which assembled in 1787 to organize the fragmentary elements which now constitute the most intense nation in existence, over which Washington presided, was in a capacious civic wisdom superior to any other of modern record—superior, in my judgment, to that which had met in the same hall twelve years before, upon which Pitt had lavished

*Intellectual Mastery secured the Constitution.*

his rhetoric of praise. Washington carried there a carefully prepared synopsis of the ancient examples, but amid the great questions and great debaters that surrounded him there is no evidence that he ever unrolled his manuscript. In the lead of the discussions South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York figured with unchallenged supremacy. And when, afterward, the work of that body was submitted for the consent of the several states, the debate in popular meetings and in state conventions summoned to the front every giant mind. The scales were turned at last by the pure argumentation of two men. I have sometimes asked myself whether, under similar surroundings in our own day, beset with the same excitement and irritation, the present generation would in the same degree as that submit its judgment to the sway of a series of papers so calm, passionless and dialectical as those which, under the name of *The Federalist*, Madison and Hamilton, but chiefly the latter, addressed to their country. With equal, with greater effect, Madison in the Convention of Virginia, Hamilton in that of New York, made their great endowments tributary to the solemn decision. Madison was born symmetrical for the highest dignities of the statesman, and culture completed the work; sound learning was added to a sound judgment, and his mind was illuminated for perspicacity and far perspective. He, and he alone, saved the government in Virginia,

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where, though young in years, he was already a popular idol. The issue hung suspended upon New York, the last, the eleventh state which was necessary to make plenary the consent and ratification, where it was carried after immense exertions. All contemporary accounts and traditions still existing carry to the credit of Hamilton that imperial result. He was then thirty-one years of age, in the bloom of his faculties, the finest genius known to American public life. His ingenuous nature and exquisite sensibility, from a Huguenot descent, the unshackled outline and clear order of his thought warmed to color by the fervor of a tropical birth, the flexibility, simplicity, and delicious amenity of his style, as pure as Addison's, his far-distant search and reach, his climacteric ascending in argument, his judgment, which Washington said was "intuitively great," displayed him in his public efforts as one of nature's thinkers, orators, jurists, and statesmen. For an entire generation, not ending at his death, he was to one-half of his countrymen the interpreter of his era. He was a leader who never flattered his followers. To him, by consent of all, the civic chaplet falls for the decision which gave this government to the North American Republic. In the wandering of a boy from college, straying many years ago among the tombstones which mark the ancient worthies of New Jersey, in the church-yard at Princeton, I stood by the side of

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a newly made grave, which bore as yet no trace of designation at its head. But I could not be ignorant as to its tenant after reading the inscription over the adjoining spot of earth consecrated to the sleeping dust of his kinsman, his ancestor, the glorified Edwards. It was the grave of Aaron Burr. "At the mention of that name the spirit of Hamilton starts up to rebuke the intrusion—to drive back the foul apparition to its gloomy abode, and to concentrate all generous feeling on itself."

I can illustrate my subject by only a brief allusion to our next and longer historical stage which followed under the constitution. It was the era of development, bringing to the direction of the public life of this country all that splendid succession which opened with Marshall and Hamilton, Jefferson and Madison, and closed with the death of Clay and Calhoun, John Quincy Adams, Webster and Everett—an array not surpassed in recent time by the chiefs of English administration. It is familiar to many now living how trustingly the people hung upon their lips and took their direction in all the policies of growth and expansion. But it was a stage of greater signification than mere development; it was our historical period of interpretation. As you know, at the close of Washington's active day all the questions and possibilities of questions touching the interpretation of the Constitution, which had been hushed in his sacred presence, flew

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into ceaseless activity, and with only an occasional interval continued to excite the general mind down to 1860, when the sword became the arbiter. During that protracted discussion and discordancy the treatment of the subject assumed the highest forms of philosophical argument, and called into use the blended acuteness and breadth of jurists and statesmen. The existence of the government would be determined by the settlement of that question of interpretation, so complex, so profound, in many respects so metaphysical in its kind, that the people by whom it must be settled were largely compelled to accept upon faith the opinions of their champions; the grander the leadership, the more trustful the following. It narrowed down at length to but two men, of whom it may be said that one of them argued the country into the greatest of modern wars, and that the other prepared it for a successful deliverance. Since the death of Washington, Jefferson, and Hamilton no two men have held the intellectual trust of such large numbers and over so many years as Calhoun and Webster pending the questions of constitutional interpretation. Calhoun was the master of his school. Exemplar of high, attracting personal qualities, eloquent with a logic which was made fervid by intensity of conviction, reasoning unerring from his elements and rejecting every expedient or phenomenal modification, bringing to questions of construction the cold and

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unrelenting methods of science regardless of the assistant or opposing forces of practical reasons, he towered above his associates in belief and was followed by the indiscriminating ranks that sometimes understood and always trusted him. I do not believe we should have had the late war if he had lived, but his death left his school to drift into it upon the teachings of his lifetime. The vindication of the government by the sword in last resort must be traced as the logical result of the opposite school, over which his great rival presided. I do not overlook that Webster had profound and luminous associates in his high argument of twenty years for the true doctrine of the government, yet he was the acknowledged leader, the accepted champion and defender of the Constitution. And now that the rebellion is by both sides conceded a failure, now that the principles which he maintained are by both sides admitted as a finality by trial of war, it is becoming to our intelligence and magnanimity to recognize the champion of the faith which carried us through. For nothing is more certain than that before the shedding of blood it was under his elucidation that the consolidation of the Union had become so assured in the convictions and affections of the people as to have prepared them for the conflict. To him above others we owe that sentiment of nationalism prevailing over statism, which became compacted and unified with the very fibre of the

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American people, and without which the Union would have parted at the touch of arms. He first made familiar to modern ears the principles upon which alone the government could live, and his pupils, his followers, were attached to the majority which upheld it to the last. It is time that all fair minds should turn from the cloud which shaded his closing days, to a full perception of his instructions which now shine with advancing splendor in the Constitution he defended. And in their enjoyment of the fresh, the final triumph of their government, which his active genius made doubly sure, if a just and grateful people shall divide its honors between the leaders of its thought and the leaders of its armies, as England divided her honors between Pitt and Wellington, then henceforth words of reproach scattered by careless tongue over the grave of Webster will no longer be accepted as the language of duty or justice, but will be treated with only that degree of respect which belongs to ingratitude, to flippancy and to folly.

But it is time to draw these reflections to a close. I must not even glance at the later — perhaps loftier — part of our history, fresh in all our hearts as to its causes and its results, its immortal deeds and immortal actors. Let it all pass for another occasion. A duty remains for each generation of intelligent, educated citizens. The day of intellectual guidance never goes by. All these agencies and



### *Conclusion.*

methods of a more diffused intellectual life, all these potent influences of a more distributed education over more numerous gradations of intelligence only render essential a higher standard for the higher masters. The advanced seminaries will still continue the advanced guard of a well sustained nationality and liberty. Although the wants of the age have spurred into activity the wonderful divisions and subdivisions of sciences and arts, and although the colleges must measurably pass under the change, yet so long as the springs of the human soul remain, a broad and liberal culture, all the generous sentiments which sciences can neither generate nor suppress, the inspiring study of old language and old history, the freedom of general learning, the increasing catholicity of modern ethics will still plead at the door of every college in the land for that sustenance upon which so many past leaders have thriven to usefulness and power. There are still juices in the old-time study for the best manhood of a nation. The colleges would be the last, the forlorn hope of a decaying people. It is our reasonable expectation that this Union will last through the ages, but if in the Providence of God, which stretches beyond our sight, its unity and glory shall ever pass away, let the last signal which shall be heard in its praise and defence come from the chiming bells of its universities.

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